Sergey Baruzdin

Alyoshka

Bucket of water

and Nail

Детгиз - 1960

Bucket of water

This had happened more than once before. Mother would ask Alyoshka for something - to bring salt from the next room or pour water out of a cup - and Alyoshka would pretend that he hadn't heard her and would continue playing. Then his mother would get up - bring in the salt, pour out the water herself, and that was it!

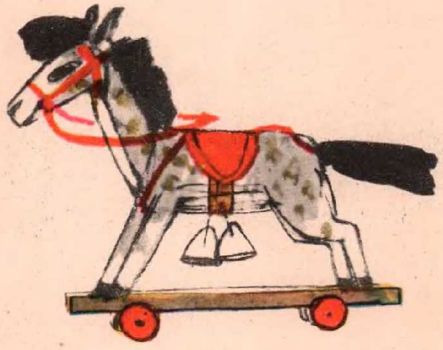
But one day Alyoshka went for a walk. He was lucky as soon he stepped out of the gate. Right next to the sidewalk there was a huge dump truck. The driver had opened the hood and was repairing the engine.

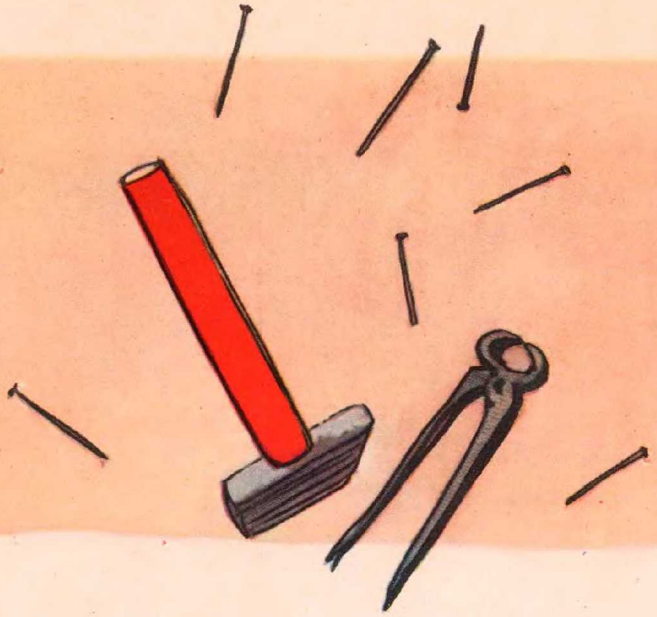
Which five-year-old boy would miss the opportunity to take another look at the big dump truck!

And Alyoshka certainly didn't miss this chance. He stopped, and stood gaping. He saw a shiny metal bear on the hood (this bear was the emblem of Yaroslavl trucks).

He saw the steering wheel in the driver's cabin and even touched the rubber wheel of the truck, which was taller than Alyoshka himself...
Finally, after fixing the engine the driver slammed the hood.
“And now will the truck move?” Alyoshka asked.
“No, the truck will not start until we fill it with water,” the driver said, wiping his hands. “By the way, where do you live? Far or close by?”
“Close by,” answered Alyoshka. “I live very close.”
“That's good!” said the driver. “Then I'll borrow some water from you. Do you mind?”
“Not at all!” said Alyoshka.
The driver pulled out an empty bucket out of the cabin, and he and Alyoshka went to Alyoshka's house.
"I’ve brought this uncle. He needs to borrow some water from us," Alyoshka explained to his mother.

"Please come in," mother said and led the driver into the kitchen.
The driver filled the big bucket full of water. Alyoshka promptly brought his own small bucket and filled it also with water.
Then they returned to the car.
The driver poured water from his bucket into the radiator.
"And mine!" said Alyoshka.
"Yes, yours too!" said the driver. He took Alyoshka's bucket and poured water from Alyoshka's small bucket into the radiator. "Now everything will be fine. And thanks for your help! See you later!"
The truck roared like a bear, shuddered, and drove off.
Alyoshka stood on the sidewalk with his empty bucket and watched the truck disappear for a long time.
And then he went home and told his mother.
“Mom! I want to help you!”
Mother was utterly surprised.
“Someone seems to have changed? I don’t recognize my son for some reason!”
“Mom, nothing has changed, it’s the same me!” Alyoshka reassured her. “I just want to help you!”





The right nail

In the morning, when father was getting ready for work, Alyoshka's mother asked him.

"Tonight, please hammer the nails in the kitchen. I need to hang up the clotheslines to dry the laundry."

Father promised and went to work.

Then mother got ready to go to the store to buy groceries.

"You play for now, son," she said to Alyoshka, "I'll be back quickly."

"I'll play," Alyoshka promised, But as soon as his mother left, he ran to the kitchen.

He took out a hammer and nails and began hammering them into the wall one by one.

He hammered in at least ten nails!

"That should be enough now," Alyoshka thought.
Just then mother returned from the store.
She entered the kitchen. "Who hammered so many nails into the wall?" she said surprisingly.
"I did," Alyoshka said proudly. "Now we don't have to wait for dad to hammer in the nails."
Mother didn't want to upset Alyoshka.
"Let's do it this way," she suggested. "We'll pull out these nails as they're not needed. But here, higher up, you please hammer in one nail. A really need a big nail up there. Okay?"
"Okay!" Alyoshka agreed.
Mother pulled out the ten nails from the wall with a plier. Then she gave Alyoshka a chair. Alyoshka climbed on the chair and hammered a big nail higher up.

"This nail is the most important one," mother said as she hung a saucepan on it.

Now, whenever Alyoshka enters the kitchen, he looks at the wall: is the saucepan still hanging?

Yes, it is hanging.

So, it's true that Alyoshka hammered the most important nail into the wall.

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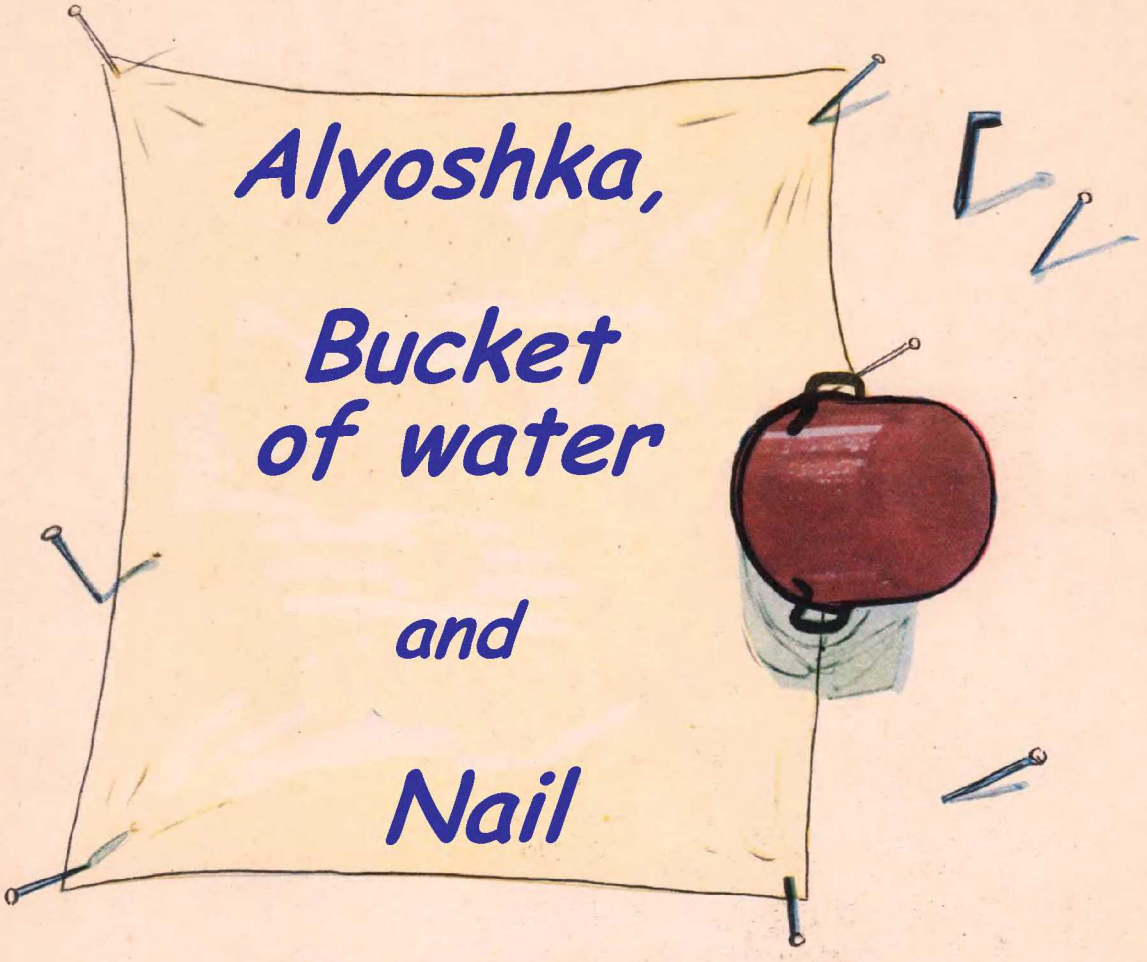
Alyoshka, Bucket of water and Nail



Illustrations by Fyodor Lemkul

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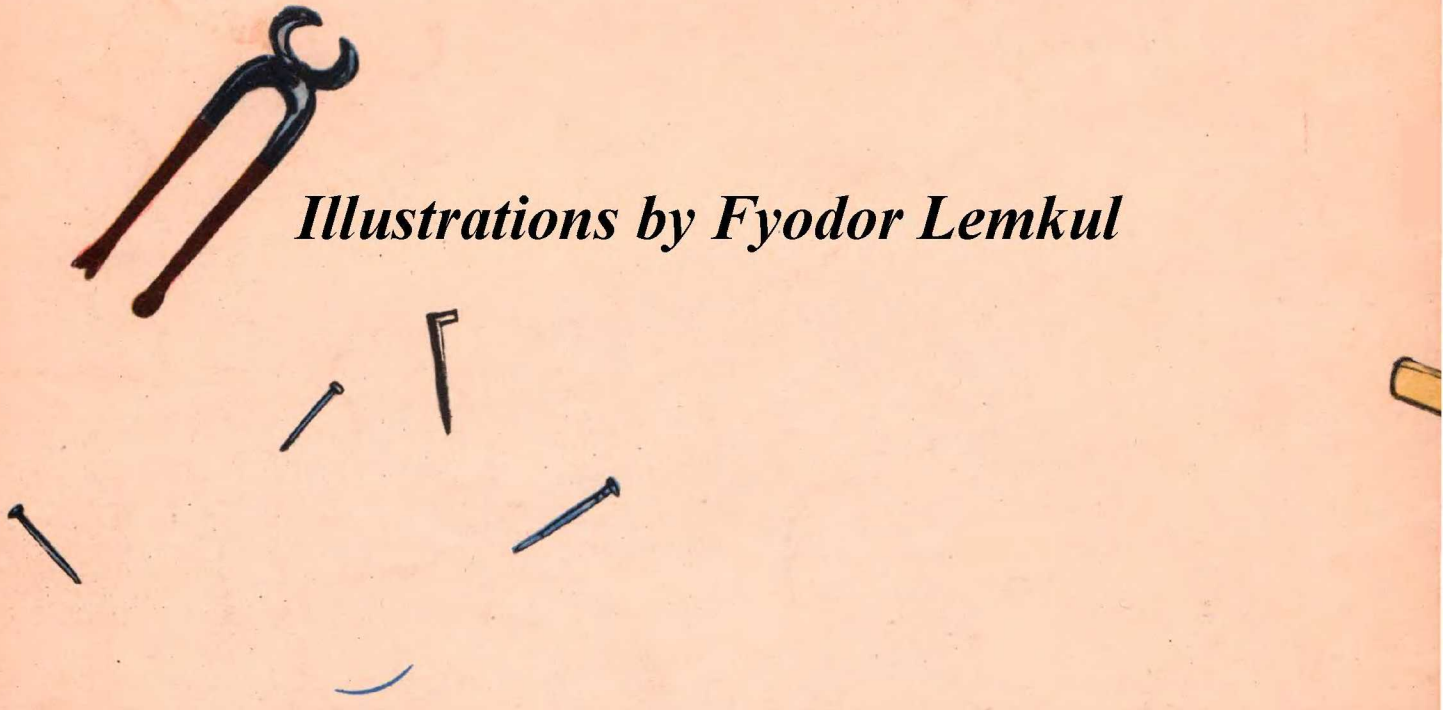

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